

First International Earth Science Olympiad South Korea

Two Indian students of class XI, Mr Ritesh Singh (K.V. Pendharkar College, Dombivli) and Mr Vijay Suralkar (Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bhandup), won Silver Medals at the first ever International Earth Science Olympiad (IESO) held in Daegu, South Korea last month. A camp was organized to train the students at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Mumbai, which is the nodal agency for conducting Science Olympiads in India.

Olympiads are competitions conducted for secondary school students every year in different branches of science like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Astronomy. The International Geoscience Education Organisation (IGEO) adopted IESO as one of its major activities at its Council Meeting held in Calgary, Canada, during August 2003. The objective of IESO is to promote Earth Science Education worldwide and forge friendship among students from different parts of the globe. In a subsequent meeting held in Seoul, South Korea during November 2004, representatives of 10 countries examined the Earth Science curriculum of each country and discussed the modalities of conducting the IESO. The statutes and syllabus for IESO were developed by the IESO committees and commissions, and an Organizing Committee was established to conduct the first IESO in South Korea, 2007. Further details of IESO can be obtained from <http://ieso.or.kr>.

It is hoped that over the years, Earth Science Education, particularly at the school level, will be highlighted, and there will be better social and public awareness of the importance of Earth Sciences in view of the changing climate, depletion of natural resources, the rising oil prices, natural disasters like tsunami (that struck the Indian Ocean region recently), etc. The launch of the first Earth Science Olympiad in 2007 is in line with the United Nations' declaration of 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth (www.yearofplanetearth.org) when programs would be launched the world over both in terms of research and public understanding of Earth Sciences.

The second IESO will be held in the Philippines (September 2008) and the third in Taiwan (August 2009).

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